WORKERS VANGUARD

Supplement
10 June 2025

La Raza Built Los Angeles

All Labor Must Beat Back Trump

Trump has unleashed the National Guard and active-duty Marines on Los Angeles to stomp out any anti-ICE protest. This escalation of his anti-immigrant crackdown—coming after the ramping up of workplace raids and arrest and beating of SEIU California president David Huerta—has set a chilling precedent. Border czar Tom Homan is threatening "more work site enforcement than you've ever seen in the history of this nation," while Trump himself promises that protesters "will be hit harder than they have ever been hit before."

This is a vicious attack not just on immigrants, but on the entire labor movement—tearing at the fabric of the unions and decapitating their leadership. But that was always one of the goals of the deportations: to weaken and divide the working class. The fig leaf of going only after criminals was always B.S., just an excuse for the Feds to terrorize immigrant communities and the working population as a whole. Ask any black person if the "war on drugs" was just about "going after the criminals." Especially in L.A., where the working class is majority Latino and immigrant, if you think these attacks are gonna be limited to the "bad ones," you are truly out of your mind. As Tupac said, "It wouldn't be L.A. without Mexicans."

This escalation must be stopped dead in its tracks! We must join together and take a stand: ***No deportations! ICE, National Guard and Marines out of L.A.! Free all detainees and protesters!*** The militant protesters must not be left to fend for themselves. We need to organize the strongest possible defense of immigrants in order to beat back Trump. The question is: how?

To assemble the force to do that, the key is to win L.A.'s working class to the fight. Right now, the pressure is intense for workers to focus on their individual situations and keep their heads down. But doing so will accomplish nothing except to leave them more vulnerable tomorrow. The paralysis in the face of Trump's attack must be broken by stressing that absent a collective fight today, the country will only descend further into chaos. Having a section of the working class that is terrorized and forced into the shadows undermines our fighting ability and guarantees that all of us will continue to be screwed.

To unite our ranks in struggle, the divisions among us cannot be ignored. Many workers (including Latinos and immigrants) voted for Trump because they believed that their lives would improve if all the "illegals" were rounded up and thrown out of the country, opening up jobs and resources for those that have been here longer. Every day, this country just gets more and more unlivable, as life's necessities become increasingly out of reach—whether that be quality housing, healthcare, jobs; hell, even the price of groceries is skyrocketing. Workers in L.A. and New York City cannot even afford to live where they work, enduring hours-long commutes every day just to barely scrape by.

These concerns cannot be dismissed. There is a way to defend the livelihoods of both U.S.-born and immigrant workers, but not if they are at one another's throats. The result of the anti-immigrant crackdown will not be more jobs for U.S.-born workers, but jobs under worse conditions. All workers will be in a weaker position to even hold on to what they have now. If these attacks go unchallenged, the state authorities will be emboldened to more aggressively target all of us. ***Do not let these attacks go unanswered! Labor: defend yourself! An injury to one is an injury to all!***

But despite issuing statements of solidarity with David Huerta, who faces a federal conspiracy charge, SEIU and other union leaders are holding back labor from any real display of its power in defense of him and everyone else swept up by the cops

Read *Workers Vanguard*, Marxist newspaper of the Central Committee of the SL/U.S.: workersvanguard.org

Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 • (212) 732-7860 • iclfi.org • vanguard@tiac.net • @WorkersVanguard

Chicago: (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

Los Angeles: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

New York: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

Oakland: (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@fastmail.net

Allied Printing Trades Union Label Council NY NJ CT 752

and *la migra*. This is because the trade-union bureaucrats are in bed with the same people who have presided over the destruction of L.A. for decades: the Democrats. After Trump's election, SEIU California campaigned to encourage Karen Bass to make L.A. a "sanctuary city." The same Karen Bass just approved the hiring of nearly 250 more cops to aid and abet ICE, crack the skulls of protesters and terrorize black and brown Angelenos! That's one hell of a black-brown coalition! Bass and Gavin Newsom cooperate with the anti-immigrant crackdown, even while they posture as tough on Trump, giving him some lip over sending in the National Guard…because LAPD was already doing the job.

The whole concept of "sanctuary cities" popularized during the "resistance" of Trump's first term was a Democratic Party lie to rope in activists and working people, while maintaining the status quo of deteriorating cities and undocumented immigrants as a cheap pool of labor. This is what Bass, Newsom and other Democrats mean when they say they love immigrants…for super-exploitation. And when the Dems retook the White House, Biden deported so many that Trump is now eager to outdo him. While Bass objects to ICE raids, it is because she prefers round-ups less disruptive to business. An alliance with the people who have done nothing but cause misery for L.A. will get you nowhere and make it impossible to win over the workers—who Bass and Newsom drove into Trump's arms—to the defense of immigrants.

Over the decades, the Democrats in L.A. have done a skillful job of pitting black people against Latinos in competition for the scraps on offer. This has fueled racial division and made black people distrust Latinos and feel they have no interest in fighting against the current raids. But this couldn't be farther from the truth. Everyone knows that when the state attacks, black people are always first or next in line. The struggles of black people, Latinos and the entire working class either advance together or fall back separately. We have no more room for the latter.

Trump has declared war on Los Angeles. There is no time to waste. Workers must step up, to defend immigrants and themselves. The heavily immigrant, 60,000-strong SEIU Local 721 L.A. County workers have been working without a contract. Their leadership sent them back to work after a two-day strike at the end of April with nothing to show for it. ***The strike must be resumed!*** A fight by Local 721 members against their Democratic bosses for a decent contract linked to the fight against the deportations would be a real step toward building a movement that can both make L.A. livable and stop ICE cold. This would be a beacon to other key unionized workforces in L.A. and beyond to take up the fight to stop the raids. Workers cannot wait for their leaders to initiate such action but will have to push forward against them. For example, even though thousands of trade unionists turned out at the SEIU-initiated rally at Grand Park on June 9, union officials instructed them to disperse rather than march to the courthouse where Huerta was being arraigned.

Union organizers should fan out across the city to intersect and organize non-union work sites before ICE shows up. Then, when they try to carry out their raids to sow terror among the workforce, the workers will have the backing of the unions to keep these businesses closed until all those detained and arrested are released. Unions should also be prepared to extend protection to any non-union workplace raided to give it the support it needs to keep operations shut down for as long as needed. Every union in L.A. should launch immigrant defense committees independent of the bosses, if they have not done so already, to mobilize any time and any place against ICE operations.

The ILWU International leadership put out a solidarity statement on behalf of Huerta but has done nothing to back it up. Longshore workers themselves must take the initiative; otherwise, the labor movement risks being thrown back. Many port workers live in Paramount and other neighborhoods under siege by ICE. ILWU Local 13 could change the whole terrain if it were to show Trump that he is not the only one who can choke off trade to advance his class interests.

Union leaders claim that pre-existing contracts tie their hands from mobilizing the unions in a show of strength. But Trump is busy rewriting the rules of engagement and showing that he does not give a damn about democratic rights, much less the rights of immigrants. Clinging to rules that no longer apply is suicide for the unions, just like limiting defense of immigrants to simply ensuring they "know their rights" is as useful as a band-aid on a bullet wound. Just look at Kilmar Ábrego García, a legal resident and SMART union member who was deported to El Salvador, only to be brought back to the U.S. after three months and put on trial for human trafficking! Clearly, knowing your rights and even having all the proper paperwork is not enough. While it is good that "ICE watch" patrols of immigrant communities are taking place, a few carloads of activists are also not enough to faze the military storming the streets.

There must be an equivalent response by our side. Labor must come out as a real force. Every worker has an interest in standing up and fighting back against the ICE gestapo, who are showing up at their workplaces and hauling away their class brothers and sisters. The attacks from Trump are only going to get worse, and a divided working class will suffer the consequences. For all those who want to fight back, turn to the organized working class, which can actually put an end to ICE's terror.

- **No deportations!**
- **Free all detainees and protesters!**
- **Drop all charges!**
- **ICE, National Guard and Marines out of L.A.!**
- **Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**
- **For working-class mobilization to stop Trump's attacks!**

WORKERS VANGUARD

Subscribe Now!
(includes *Spartacist*)

$10/6 issues • workersvanguard.org/subscribe